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A L K I B L A

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# DISQUISITION

Upon WORSHIPING towards the

# E A S T.

Wherein are Contain'd,

The General ANTIQUITY, the RISE, and REASONABLENESS of this Religious Ceremony in the *Gentile World*: It's early ADOPTION into the *Church of Christ*; with a Free and Impartial EXAMINATION of the Reasons assigned for it by the Antient FATHERS.

---

By a Master of Arts of the University of Oxford.

~~By W. Aston Master of Warwicks~~  
Enchiridion non ad Ostentationem Ingenii, aut Eloquentiæ conscripti, verum ad hoc solum, ut mederer Errori vulgo Religionem constituentium in Ceremoniis & Observationibus *plusquam Judaicis* rerum corporalium, ea quæ ad Pietatem spectant mirè negligentium. ERASMUS.

Such have been the corrupt Inclinations of Man, ever superstitiously given to make new honouring of God of his own Head; and then to have more Affection and Devotion to keep That, than to search out God's Holy Commandments and to keep Them.

CRANMER.

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A. A. K. I. B. I. A.

A.

# DISCUSSION

Upon Worshipping towards the

E. A. S. I.

Whence is Cometh

The General Antiquity of the Religion  
Reasons of this Religion's Growth  
in the World: With a Description  
into the Growth of Christianity: with a  
particular Examination of the Reasons  
assigned for it by the Ancient Writers.

By a Minister of the Gospel.  
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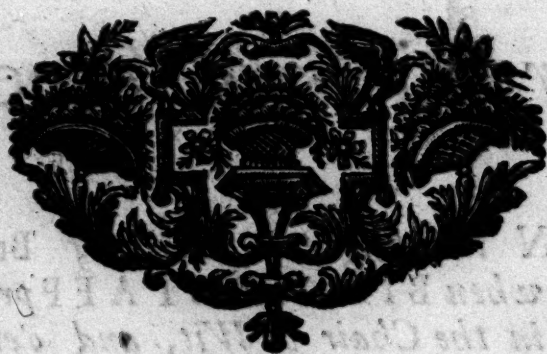


THE  
AUTHOR  
TO

*Sir Richard Steele.*

**I**N the brightest Days of Britain,  
when BICKERSTAFF presided  
in the Chair of Wit, and o'er this  
happy Landsbower'd Manna down, which  
suited every Taste, I had the Honour  
(tho' unworthy and unknown) to be ac-  
cepted as an humble Correspondent: And  
it gives me now a melancholy Reflexion,  
when I am once more inclin'd to visit  
the World in Print, that the only Per-  
son,

son, who introduc'd me to it, is Him-  
self retir'd.—To be an Intruder upon  
Solitude, I am conscious, is Rudeness;  
but, as the greatest Souls have never  
been so much ador'd, as when departed;  
Suffer me, Sir, to approach your Recess,  
(which ought to be sacred) with the  
Reverence due to the Genius of our  
Isles, and to make this small Oblation  
of Gratitude to th' immortal Manes of  
the SPECTATOR.



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# DISQUISITION

UPON

## WORSHIPPING

TOWARDS THE

# EAST.



**D**IVINE WORSHIP being  
an Act of personal Address,  
that in the Performance there-  
of we should turn ourselves to-  
wards the Object we adore, is  
the Rubrick of Nature, and  
common Sense alone sufficiently informs us.  
Now God being an omnipresent Object,

A

whose



*Trismegist.* whose Center, it has been said of old, is every  
 Prov. xv. where; and whose Eyes, we read, are in  
 13. every Place; it seems to me a thing very in-  
 different which way we turn in making our  
 Adresses to Him; for that we cannot any  
 way turn from him, nor towards him one  
 way more than another: for whether in pay-  
 ing my Devotion I look up to Heaven, he  
 is there; or if I fall low upon the Earth,  
 and humble myself to Hell, he is there also.  
 For my part, therefore, I shall readily own  
 (supposing always he that officiates may be  
 as well heard) it would be far from giving  
 me any Offence, should I see a whole Con-  
 gregation every one, if possible, facing a  
 different way from each other: thus would  
 they bear Testimony to the Immensity, the  
 Ubiquity, or Omnipresence of the Deity  
 with whom they have to do; and under  
 what more pertinent and awful Notion could  
 they call upon him?

I AM not ignorant, many ingenious, and,  
 perhaps, not ill-meant Arguments have been  
 devised in favour of one uniform Aspect in  
 the Service of God; but am humbly of  
 opinion, were they all put together in the  
 Ballance, the single Idea of an omnipresent  
 Being, as above naturally suggested to us,  
 in point of Edification, would outweigh them  
 all: nor can I ever hope to see more true  
 Devotion and Decency than in a People  
 acting under a just Influence of this Concep-  
 tion. I shall only farther add at present;  
 in the Worship of Images indeed, or false  
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 lib. 28.

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## *Worshiping towards the EAST.*

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Gods, to address ourselves more ways than one must (for Reasons sufficiently obvious) be a thing both indecent and absurd; but 'tis the peculiar and incommunicable Distinction of the Worship of the true God, that which way soever we turn, it will be a Circumstance by Nature perfectly indifferent.

YET Men, says the Preacher, *have sought out many Inventions*: So busy and fruitful is Fancy, that it has produced various Opinions, and various Parties on this very occasion, as will abundantly appear to any one who will be at the pains to search after them. Eccles. vii. 29.

IN worshiping, says Pliny, *a We turn about the whole Body*; and this Turn, we may learn from Plautus *b*, by the Romans was practised to the right: but, from Pliny again, that the Masters of the Ceremonies in France did at the same time opine, the Motion to the Left had the more religious Cast, and was consequently the more orthodox Turn of the two.

BUT waving the Decision of a Point of this Nicety and Moment in Theology, as

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*a* In adorando ----- totum Corpus circumagimus: quod in lævam fecisse Gallia religiosius credunt. *Plin. lib. 28. cap. 2.*

*b* *Ph.* Quo me vertam nescio. *Pa.* Si Deos salutas, dextravorsum censeo. *Plaut. Curcul. Act. i. Sc. 1. viz. Ph.* I know not which way to turn me. *Pa.* If you are for praying, to the right about I trow.

more proper for the Determination of the next free General Council, than the Pen of a private Divine, I shall proceed directly to the Subject of the Enquiry proposed.

THAT Worshiping towards the East was a Custom generally received by the old Romans, may appear from this general Maxim in their Temple-Architecture, *Let the ALTARS look towards the EAST.* And as to the Grecians before them, the Right Reverend Author of their *Archæologiæ*, treating of their religious Affairs, tells us, *'Twas an ancient Custom among the Heathens to worship with their Faces towards the EAST:* and in a following Chapter cites the Greek Scholiast upon Pindar remarking, *That they were wont to turn their Faces towards the EAST when they prayed to the Gods.* And our

Vol. I. p.  
176.

<sup>c</sup> But that I may not seem ludicrous upon so Sacred an Assembly, by offering any thing beneath the Dignity of their Consideration, let me here apprise the courteous Reader — By the Rubricks of the famous Mass, in *usum Sarum*, the Priest is frequently enjoind to kiss the Altar on the right Hand of the Sacrifice; — in his Marginal Notes upon which our venerable Martyrologist very seriously demands — And why not on the left Hand as well? So that, for ought appears to me, this may be still a moot Point in Divinity; a Question upon which the Doctors, Christian as well as Heathen, differ. Vide *Acts and Monuments* Vol. III. sub. *Init.* where also may be seen a Verbal Translation of the Mass in English, by Coverdale.

<sup>d</sup> *Aræ spectent ad Orientem. Vitruv. lib. iv. cap. ult.*

<sup>e</sup> The Original is thus recorded by Mr. Selden de Synedr. lib. 3. *κατὰ τὰς ἀνατολὰς ἰνυψῶν τοῖς Θεοῖς.*

learned



## *Worshipping towards the EAST.*

5

learned *Spencer*<sup>f</sup>, than whom few seem to have been more vers'd in Subjects of this Nature, observes in general of the yet more ancient Heathens, *That to turn themselves towards the EAST, upon their first Entrance into their Temples, was accounted by them a Ceremony highly religious.*

AND, if we go nearer yet to the Fountains of Antiquity, we shall find the same Practice in use also amongst the Oriental Nations, with whom we meet with an express Term to our present purpose, denoting the Point of the Heavens towards which they directed their divine Worship. This they called their *KEBLA*: for my first Notice whereof I own myself indebted to the inestimable Labours of that truly valuable Antiquary the late worthy Dean of *Norwich*, in his most curious and entertaining Discourse of the SECT of the *MAGIANS*, whose *KEBLA*, he tells us, was the *RISING SUN*, *i. e.* (as he explains himself) *they al-*

*Coneft. p. 217. Vol. I. Ed 8<sup>o</sup> &c.*

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<sup>f</sup> --- post primum Templi introitum, Ceremonia religiosa admodum apud Ethnicos antiquiores haberetur. *De Leg. Heb. Rit. p. 845. Ed. Cantab. 1685.*

<sup>g</sup> *Keblah, Kebleh, or Kibleh, an Arabick Term, that properly signifies the Place towards which they turn, which one hath or ought to have before him, &c. Diction. Sacr. And that notable Linguist, Mr. John Gregory, tells us --- In the holy Way the EAST is called Kedem, i. e. the Face; --- tho' indeed Kedem properly signifieth not the Face, but that which is before the Face, and is the same with Kibla in the Arabick. Notes &c. upon some Passages of Scripture, p. 81. Ed. Lond. 1650.*

*ways*

Lib. I.

ways worshiped with their Faces towards the EAST: which also was observed of old by Herodotus, whom Tully stiles the Father of History.

P. 177.

AND indeed how exceeding ancient this Custom must needs have been, we may easily infer from what Dean Prideaux, upon his first mention of the Magians, informs us, viz. That in the Times, whereof he is there speaking, *All the Idolatry of the World was divided between two Sects.* But I much question whether we are yet at the Source, or first Rise of the Custom now enquired after; nay, I am rather satisfied we must allow it an higher Original.

FROM the first Sects of Idolatry then let our next Step be to the first Object of it, which, by the general Concurrence of ancient and modern Authors, was the SUN. <sup>h</sup> Sanchoniathon, speaking of the Worship the Phœnicians and Egyptians (whom he stiles the oldest of Mortals) paid to the Sun, tells us--*This God they accounted sole Lord of Heaven:* <sup>i</sup> And Plato writes of the first Inhabitants of Greece---They held the Sun, &c. to be the only Gods: and that the very name Θεός, God, was originally derived from τὸν, to

<sup>h</sup> Τὸν Θεὸν ἐνόμιζον μόνον ἄραν κίριον, βελσάμην καλοῦντες, ὃ ἐστὶ παρὰ Φοινίῃ κίριος ἕρανοῦ. apud Euseb. lib. 1. de Præp. Evang. cap. 9.

<sup>i</sup> Φαίνονται μοι οἱ πρῶτοι τῶ ἀνθρώπων περὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα τέτταρες μόνες θεὸς ἑῷα --- ἥλιον, &c. Plato in Cratylō.

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p. 330.

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## *Worshipping towards the EAST.*

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run, alluding to the constant Courses performed by the heavenly Bodies. <sup>k</sup> Ludovicus Cappellus thus declares his Opinion, *The most ancient Idolatry of all seems to have been that of the Sun: with whom* <sup>l</sup> Vossius, <sup>m</sup> Stillingfleet, <sup>n</sup> Gale, <sup>o</sup> Jurieu, &c. do entirely accord.

BUT suppose we had not their Authority to warrant our Belief; yet, as we have nothing to the contrary in the Records of holy Writ, the very Reasonableness, or Probability of the Fact, may be admitted as an Evidence in the Case. That Mankind is naturally prone to Superstition and Idolatry, so as to worship and serve the Creature even more than the Creator, is a Truth but too manifest from the Experience of all Ages as

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<sup>k</sup> Quæ (viz. Solis Adoratio) omnium prima & antiquissima videtur fuisse Idololatria: *Annotat. apud Crit. Sac. Vol. IX. Col. 3837.*

<sup>l</sup> Nempe ut paulatim ab uno veroque Numine recessit Genus Humanum; ita sensim, & quasi gradibus quibusdam, ἡ πολυθεΐα cepit incrementa; primum Soli divinus obtigit Honos; quia nihil eo sensibus nostris vel conspectuum magis vel acceptum. *Voss. de Theol. Gentil. lib. ii. p. 330.*

<sup>m</sup> *The Worship of the Sun was, as far as we can learn, the great and most early Idolatry of the Eastern Countries. Orig. Sac. 4<sup>o</sup> 1662. p. 44.*

<sup>n</sup> *The Supreme Object (of natural Theology) was, for the most part, some Planetary Deity; first the Sun alone. Court of the Gentiles, Part I. p. 215.*

<sup>o</sup> Monsieur Jurieu, having argued for the Antiquity of the Chaldeans, concludes, Or il est certain aussi, que le plus ancien Culte des Chaldeens c' étoit celui du Soleil: *Histoire des Dogmes, &c. p. 407.*

well



Rom.i.25. well as St. Paul's; and that of all the Works of the Creation, the Sun first engaged their Devotion may be held more than probable, if we consider only its Appearance and Effects.

Par. lost  
lib. 4.  
Pf.cxxxvi.  
8.

THE former was incomparably the most glorious of all their Eyes beheld; insomuch that on this account alone the SUN is justly enough said by our Poet to --- *look like the God of the new World*: and by the divine Psalmist expressly asserted to be *made --- to rule by Day*: Holy Job mentions the very Sight of it as a <sup>p</sup> *Temptation*; and Moses as a <sup>q</sup> *Compulsion* to adore it. Nor shall we find the <sup>r</sup> *Effects* of the Sun, if we consider its Usefulness to Mankind, less glorious than its Appearance, or less attractive of Adoration: So that <sup>r</sup> some have been ready to apologize for, and even excuse the Idolatry of

<sup>p</sup> *If I beheld the SUN when it shined --- and my Heart hath been secretly inticed.* Job xxxi. 26, 27.

<sup>q</sup> *Least thou lift up thine Eyes to Heaven, and when thou seest the Sun, &c. shouldest be driven to worship them.* Deut. iv. 16.

<sup>r</sup> Vossius, speaking of the Benefits of Light only, has this Expression --- *Lucem rem esse omnino divinam ostendunt.* De Orig. Et. Idolâtr. lib. ii. p. 314.

<sup>r</sup> And Monsieur Jurieu scruples not to affirm, De toutes les Erreurs il n'y en a pas une qui soit plus supportable, que celle de ceux qui ont pris le Soleil pour une Dieu; car cet Astre est si beau, si plein des Traits de la Divinité, qu' on a bien pû facilement prendre la Copie pour l'Original. *Histoire Critique*, p. 406. Ed. Amst. 1704.

There

*Worshipping towards the EAST.*

9

of the first Race of Men towards this great and excellent Luminary. As they sensibly received from the Sun those inestimable Benefits of Light, Heat, and the Production of the Fruits of the Earth, (their then Subsistence) we may reasonably imagine, that, where Revelation or Reflexion did not sufficiently interpose, 'twas by the SUN all things appeared to them to live, move, and have their Being; that just Foundation of divine Honour and Homage which the Apostle so elegantly ascribes to God himself: their crime therefore was the more pardonable as it was the more natural: And, to

Acts xvii.  
28.

There may be farther also offered in their behalf, the Consideration of the Influence which the Heavenly Bodies have upon the human, with respect to the Disorders whereto they are subject; of this it seems Physicians were very apprehensive from the Beginning. One of the greatest of the present Age tells us, the very first Writers (ultimi Scriptores) of the Faculty are full of it, and what his own Opinion is may be seen from the Title of his Book, De imperio Solis, &c. and what he engages to shew in his first Entrance upon his Subject; viz. Solis Lunæque cursum, pro variis eorum Stationibus, varie Corpora nostra afficere. To this, I think, we need only farther add, the Hypothesis of that most ancient Science of Judicial Astrology which Mr. Gale tells us began to flourish amongst the Chaldeans and Egyptians even in the Beginning of Idolatry: and concludes in these words --- If we grant the Hypothesis which Judicial Astrologers have to this very Day contended for; that these Celestial Bodies have an universal Influence, not only on natural Bodies, but also on Politick States, yea, on the Spirits of Men, and that directly; this, I say, being granted, I cannot see how we can rationally deny them a Deity. Court of the Gentiles, Part I. p. 219.

B

to

*come to my Point*, as the SUN was, upon this account the most pardonable, I see no reason but that we may conclude it was also the most primitive, or first Object of Idolatry in the World.

THIS being a fix'd Point: That the Custom of worshipping towards the East was an original Custom with the Worshipers of the SUN, and consequently coeval, at least, with Idolatry itself, will be easily supposed: for what more natural in such a Case than for Men to *salute the Return of their God; to wait for his Uprising; (as the modern Phrase is) to attend his Levee; to reverence his Appearance; and to be ready to pay their Court the Moment he presents himself?*

WE must allow then the Custom of worshipping towards the EAST is founded in Reason and Nature, *with respect to all that worshiped the Sun*: And as that Worship became the most universal of all other, spreading itself by degrees into every Nation under the Sun (for, says one, *the Universe is his Temple*†) no wonder this Custom, which arose from the same Fountain, should run the same Course, and become universal also; whence, no doubt, have we the Proverb in use to this Day, --- *All the World worships the rising SUN.*

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† Mundus universus est templum solis. *Alex. ab Alex. lib. ii. cap. 22.*

BUT



## *Worshipping towards the EAST.*

11

BUT, as it is seen in many other Cases, when once Reason has made a Custom, *that Custom shall maintain itself without the Assistance of Reason, and perhaps in Defiance to it; so may it appear in the present Case: for in Consequence of the general, and indeed natural, Rule by me laid down in the Entrance of this Discourse, that, in worshipping every one should address himself towards the Deity he adores, it being become customary for all the Adorers of the Rising-Sun to worship towards the EAST, it became, by degrees, customary also, with Men at their Devotion, still to direct their Worship the same Way, tho' the Sun were got into some other Quarter of the Heavens, or they were adoring some other Deity.*

THIS I find to have been the Sentiment of two very learned Men, who have touch'd upon this Subject before me, and stand above cited in this Discourse: The Words of the first may be thus translated: --- *It is very likely the Custom was very ancient, and had its beginning with the first Idolatry of the SUN; viz. for Men to worship it generally as it rose, and so, whenever they were about any Devotion to turn themselves towards the EAST.*

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<sup>r</sup> Valde autem verisimile est, perantiquum etiam esse, & fortasse a primis Solaris Cultus temporibus morem eum provenisse, ut præcipuè colerent Solem orientem, ac, quocunque etiam tempore, ad Orientem conversi precarentur Deum. *Vossius de Origine & Progressu Idololatriæ. lib. ii. p. 320. Ed. Amst. 1641.*

The other Passage referred to I have literally rendered as follows: --- *Besides these Places where they worshiped the SUN, without doubt they worshiped it also in all their Temples, and in all their other places of abode, at its coming above the Horizon; and THENCE came the Custom always to turn themselves towards the EAST, in all the Sacrifices they offered to the celestial Deities.*

SOME Exceptions indeed I meet with to this general Rule; but it will soon appear to any one consulting the Point, That thus to worship towards the EAST was the common, tho' not constant, Custom of the *Heathen World*, from the first Entrance of *Idolatry* into it: But as that is an Occurrence that bears no Date, some supposing it before, some not till after the Flood, we cannot be exact as to the precise time when it began; nor, consequently as to the Beginning of the so much celebrated religious Custom, which is the Subject of our present Enquiry; for tho' I humbly conceive, it has been evidently shewn, not to be at all inferior in Antiquity to Idolatry itself; yet beyond this I shall not pretend to trace it.

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\* Outre ces lieux, dans lesquels on adoroit le Soleil, sans doute ils l'adoroient dans tous leurs Temples, & dans toutes leur demeures, lors qu'il sortoit de dessus l'Horizon: --- & de là est venue la Coûtume de se tourner toujours du côté de l'Orient dans tous les Sacrifices qui se faisoient aux Dieux celestes. *Histoire critique des Dogmes & des Cultes, &c. p. 716.*

AT the same time I am not unapprised, with what Vehemence a certain learned "Academick, of no small Fame in his Generation, has contended; *The whole World, even from Adam down to Abraham's time, worshiped towards the EAST; that it was an original, principal, and ought to have been an everlasting Ceremony; but that, by an Error of the Persian and Chaldean Worshipers, it having degenerated into an Idolatry to the SUN, Abraham, by the Instinct of God, appointed out the West to his Hebrews; and that therefore the Tabernacle and Temple were set towards that Side of Heaven, God in the mean time seeming to leave his mistaken Place in the EAST: ---* And these truly are Notions that do not want their Admirers at this Day; but as, in the main, they appear to me to be grounded only upon *Talmudick Fables, and Arabian Tales*, or what (in one Sense of the Word indeed) we may call *Comments on the Bible*, I shall,

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<sup>u</sup> Mr. John Gregory, sometime of Christ Church in Oxford, in his *Notes and Observations* above cited. p. 84. Who had also well nigh finish'd a particular Treatise upon the present Subject, and under the same Title, viz. *ALKIBLA*, i. e. The Kibla, whereto he refers us p. 19. but this learned Tract, it seems, was lost, which the Editor of his Works, in the account of his Life prefix'd, laments in this pathetick Manner: --- And here, Reader! I cannot but drop a Tear for the loss of that his excellent Piece, entituled by himself *ALKIBLA*: in which Tract, with very great Judgment and Learning, he vindicated the Antiquity of Eastward Adoration, as far beyond an Altar or a Crucifix, (the Romish Bounds) as the Flood precedes in time these superstitious Distinctions of the Christian: Which gallant Refutation of the Popish Error, I the rather mention, &c.

for



A DISQUISITION *upon*

for the present, leave them as I found them, and the rather, because they will more properly offer themselves to Examination hereafter.

I DOUBT not but God, by his own gracious Appointment, was worshiped of our first-fathers before any other Being; yet can I see no just Grounds, either in Reason or Record, that should induce them, in their Adoration of him, to turn towards the EAST, more than towards any other Quarter in the Heavens.

FOR, first, as to the Reason, or Nature of the Thing, (as I have above hinted) it seems to me an Absurdity to imagine that he, who is by Nature equally in all Places, should be more especially in any one Place, or that we should fancy him so to be, *without any sensible Appearance of it.* Our great \* *Spencer*, I must confess, seems to declare his Opinion, That *were it left to the Judgment of Men to decide which way God should be worshiped, the EAST would certainly have the Preference:* And I am the more surpris'd at it, because he delivers this Opinion in the midst of a Discourse, the main Scope whereof is to shew, That the

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\* Siquid humano Judicio, in Sede vel Throno Numinis eligendo, tribuendum esset; Homines proculdubio æquo & decoro multo magis convenire judicarent, ut Deus (qui Lux est & Lucem inaccessam habitat) in loco aliquo versus Orientem habitaret: &c. *De Leg. Heb. Rit.* p. 846.

*Worshiping towards the E A S T.*

15

Ancients (who by some are thought to have had the use of Reason, nor does any thing appear to the contrary, but that they were left free to follow it in this particular,) did certainly worship towards the W E S T: but I should be still more surpris'd had not the learned Doctor introduced this his Observation with a *Siquid humano Judicio tribuendum esset*, were any regard to be had to Man's Judgment in the Case; whereby to me he seems fairly to yield, he was not certain, after all, Reason could determine any thing in the Matter.

A N D if Recourse be had to Revelation; a Man, unless he be thoroughly devoted to the Cause, and of a sanguine Constitution into the Bargain, will meet with little Encouragement (as far as I can see) to believe, that this *Eastward Adoration was originally of God*: for, in a word, 'tis the very reverse of that practis'd in his own House: for God, in the Temple, having made choice of the West-End wherein to manifest his own Residence, this (as Dean *Prideaux* observes) became the K E B L A of the Jews, *and all that entered into the Temple to worship God, did it with their Faces to the W E S T*: nor was any thing a greater Offence to his People, than the contrary Posture; as is evident from that remarkable Passage of *Ezekiel*, where mention is made of the *Abomination* of 25 Men standing in the Court of the Lord's House *with their faces towards the E A S T*: for which very

p. 217.

chap. viii.

15, 16.

- ubi supra* very Reason (as the Dean <sup>y</sup> observes) *They were looked upon as Apostates that had changed their Religion, and were gone over to the Worship of the MAGI, i. e. the Idolatry of the Sun.*
- Deut. iv. 16. To prevent which also we find *Moses*, in his Time, cautioning the *Israelites* in the most solemn manner, not so much as to look up to *Heaven itself* in their Devotions; and holy *Job*, who disputes Antiquity with *Moses*, and even with *Abraham* himself, disclaims the Practice
- Job xxxi. 26. now before us a Crime: *If*, says he, *I beheld the Sun when it shin'd*; i. e. (as both the

<sup>y</sup> The Authority of so competent a Judge in the Case I chose to lay in sight, the better to obviate an Objection, which may here arise; viz. That the Crime, charged by the Prophet on the 25 Persons aforesaid, was, not simply worshipping towards the EAST, but worshipping the Sun towards the EAST; that therefore, not the Posture, but Object of their Worship was the Abomination: To which I reply, 'twas both the one and the other; and to what is said above, I shall only desire to have added, --- First, That it was (which also has been already noted) a received Opinion amongst the Jews, that in opposition to the Idolatry of the Sun, their father Abraham taught them, by the Direction of God himself, to worship towards the WEST: no wonder therefore that by them a Change in the Posture of Devotion was regarded as a Change in Religion: Again; that it was with the Jews a Notion (as in due place also will appear) current even to a Proverb, That the Majesty of God was in the West: which certainly, within the Courts of the Temple, could not be denied them; for any Person therefore There to turn his Face to the EAST, must have been in common Construction to turn his Back to God: and so might be literally termed, what the learned Dean styles it, an APOSTACY; the very Suspicion of which, right or wrong, is ABOMINATION enough with the People, and with the Prophets, of all Religions even to this Day!

Syriack



## *Worshiping towards the E A S T.*

17

Syriack and Arabick express it) at its Appearing or Rising: as who should say --- If I pray'd, or turn'd towards the E A S T.

B U T notwithstanding this early and open Opposition from the Servants of the true God, in time the E A S T prevail'd; and, by degrees, became the most general favourite K E B L A of all the idolatrous Part of Mankind; and thus it stood triumphant in the Reign of Augustus Cæsar, during which Dr. Spencer produces a very express Evidence, <sup>2</sup> that *tho' the contrary was indeed the more primitive Custom, This, by the Humour of succeeding Ages, at length obtained to be the Catholick Practice*: which also was sufficiently implied by that general Rule for Altar-Building above-cited from the Architect Vitruvius, who flourished under the same Emperour, and who again tells us, \* *There seemed to be a Necessity for placing all the Altars of the Gods towards the E A S T.*

A N D here give me leave only farther to observe, before I proceed, that we may also trace back this Eastern Position of Altars, as far as the Reign of, that most renowned

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<sup>2</sup> His, in majorem rei fidem, Hygeni disertum subnectam testimonium: ---Antiqui Architecti in Occidentem Templâ spectare, recte scripserunt: postea placuit omnem Religionem eo convertere, ex quâ parte Cœli Terra illuminatur: *De Leg. Heb. Rit. p. 845.*

\* Aras omnes Deorum necesse esse videatur ad Orientem spectare: *De Archit. lib. iv. c. 5.*

Vid. Con-  
nect. p.  
216, &c.

Prince and Pope of the Magicians, Zoroaster; who so ordered the matter, that *All*, who came to worship, might approach them on the *West-Side*; that so having their *Faces* towards the *Altar*, and also towards the rising *Sun* at the same time, they might direct their *Worship* towards both: and in this *Posture*, (adds Dean *Prideaux*) they always performed every *Part* of their *Worship*: and farther he tells us, That to worship before the *Sun* was not a new *Institution* of Zoroaster, but the *antient Usage* of that *Sett*; who, as it falls out, have herein left an *Example*, with respect to which it may justly enough be said, the *WORLD* is gone after them: for my present purpose it may suffice to have recourse only (once again) to the *Romans*, in the *Period* and *Passage* last referr'd to in *Vitruvius*, wherein he tells us, *there was an apparent Necessity*, all the *Altars* of the *Gods* should look towards the *East*; which he grounds upon this, viz. That so *People* at their *Devotion* might at once address themselves towards the *ALTAR* and the *EAST*.

1 Theff. ii. 9. Thus then stood the Case when our blessed Saviour came upon Earth to turn men from idols to serve the living and true God: and, indeed, with me he needs no other Proof of his Divinity than his miraculous Success in this particular: But tho' the

<sup>a</sup> Et ita Vota suscipientes contueantur Aram & Orientem Cœli: *Vitr. ubi. sup.*

Heathens did reject their Gods, they retained their *Kebla*; at least it was soon retrieved, and became more generally receiv'd after, than before, the *Æra* of Christ; for the convert Jews, who were of them that had most signally opposed it, henceforth gave up their Point; so that from this Quarter came a considerable Reinforcement to the Observers of the Eastern Mode: which therefore was so far from receiving any check upon this great Revolution in Religion, that from this very time may we most properly date its universal Prevalence or Reception. For I suppose no man, who pretends to have looked into the Antiquities of the Church, will deny that worshiping towards the EAST was a very early and very general Custom in the same: Of this we need no other Argument than the frequent mention made of it by the most antient Christian Authors<sup>b</sup>: *Tertullian* in particular, who flourished in the second Century, acknowledges, Christians were then, on this very account, taken for Worshipers of the SUN<sup>c</sup>. But as this was an Imputation they utterly disclaimed, and assigned many other Reasons for their Practice, I shall produce about half a Score of such as were most current in the primitive Times, or have since been thought original. Tho' to

<sup>b</sup> Nos fatemur haud inviti vetustissimum in Ecclesiâ Christianâ fuisse Ritum, cum illius mentio fiat ab antiquissimis Patribus: *Gerbardi Loc. de extremo Judicio. p. 60.*

<sup>c</sup> Inde suspicio, quod innotuerit Nos ad Orientis Regionem precari: *Apol. 16. p. 688. Folio, Ed. Paris. 1580.*



Speak my mind, I do not think the good Fathers &c. extreamly happy in their choice of the said Reasons; and shall therefore, with all dutiful Submission, take the Liberty to make some brief Observations thereupon, as I proceed: and that I may be the less obnoxious to the Imputation, either of ignorantly misapprehending, or wilfully misrepresenting the Sense of the Fathers on this occasion, I shall chuse to express it in the Words of such of our approved Authors, as have been most justly celebrated for their Learning, Judgment, and Integrity; nor do I conceive it necessary (since my utmost Ambition is not a full Margin) to trouble my Reader, or myself, with making many more References, than what they have already made to our Hands,

See also  
c. iii. 8.

FIRST, then, 'tis alleg'd the primitive Christians prayed towards the EAST; *Because the EAST is a Title given to Christ in the Old Testament*; for which they cite Zech. vi. 12. which, from the *Septuagint*, they translated, --- *Behold the Man whose name is the EAST*<sup>d</sup>. But this Translation of theirs the accurate Author of that most excellent Treatise, entitled --- *An Enquiry into the Constitution &c. of the Primitive Church*, clearly shews to have been a Mistake, arising from the Ambiguity of a Greek Word, and

<sup>d</sup> Justin. Martyr. Cent. 2. Καὶ ἄλλαν ἢ γραφὴν φησιν, ἰδὲ εἰς τὴν Ἀνατολὴν ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 334. See, *The Enquiry*, Part ii. p. 19.

the Fathers not understanding the Original Hebrew, which ought to have been rendered, as in our own Translation it is, the BRANCH, and not the EAST. To what this most judicious Writer has there observed, I shall only add, in Vindication of our *English Bible*, that by thus rendering the Text, it has made it exactly to accord with the foregoing Prophecies on the occasion both in *Jeremiab* and *Isaiab*. *Behold the days come*, saith the Lord, *that I will raise unto David a righteous branch*: Jer. xxiii. *And there shall come a rod out of the stem of* <sup>5</sup> *Jesse*, (saith *Isaiab*) *and a branch shall grow out of his ROOTS.* --- Thus is the Harmony of the Prophets preserved: And I doubt not but our old Translators had some regard, in their pious Labours, to the Harmony of Sense also; which (under Correction) in the present Case may be likewise much better preserved, by affirming of a BRANCH, that (not to say any thing of *Root and Stem*) *it shall be brought forth; that it shall grow up; that it shall be raised and prosper;* than by predicating (pardon me for once a Logical Term) the same Things of the EAST; which, I must confess, I am not yet Philosopher enough to demonstrate to be a Vegetable.

IF then the Foundation should be found to fail, the Superstructure of the Fathers must fall on course: for I cannot suppose them so absurd as to have argued; Do not the Prophets call our Saviour the BRANCH? Therefore do we worship towards the EAST: Nor, indeed,

indeed, does there appear to me any cogent Inference in the Case, if we admit the other Translation; for our Saviour calls himself  
 Joh. x. 9. *the Door*: but what then, may not a Man say his Prayers at Church without staring out at the Porch?

Pag 91.  
 Ed. Fol.

IT might therefore be, I suppose, of no very formidable Consequence, tho' it were true, which the Rational Illustrator (as he styles himself) of the Book of Common-Prayer affirms, viz. --- in Zech. iii. 8, and vi. 12. *The Messiah is called the BRANCH; and in Luk. i. 78. The Day-Spring; in all which Places the original Words signify the EAST, and are so rendered in all other Versions of the Bible.* I say, --- If this Assertion were as true, as 'tis positive, it would not be exceedingly to the Purpose. --- But this ingenuous Gentleman, I doubt not, when he has once consulted the said Originals and Versions with his own Eyes, will take a proper opportunity to let the World know, he was a little over credulous in the matter. But, to close my Observations upon this protoprimitive Reason for worshiping towards the EAST, I cannot but profess; Glad am I, that no pagan Sophister of old happened to

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*How much more happily has Tacitus expressed himself on occasion of this so mistaken Prophecy! viz. Pluribus PERSUASIO inerat, antiquis Sacerdotum Literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret ORIENS; i. e. Many were under a Persuasion; or, there was a very common Notion got amongst them, That &c. Hist. Lib. v.*  
 discover



discover the weak Side of it; with what Triumph and Insult would such an one have cried out --- *The Christian Doctors do not understand the sacred Books themselves, which contain the Mysteries and Principles of their own Profession; but are as wide in their Notions from the true Sense and Interpretation of them, as EARTH from HEAVEN!*

A SECOND Reason, in Point of Time, which I meet with for Christians worshiping towards the EAST is this, viz. *Because of the Similitude of the Rising of the Sun, with our Spiritual Arising out of the Darknes of Sin and Corruption.*<sup>f</sup>

BUT if the Sun, according to modern Systems, should happen not to rise at all, there then can be no more Similitude or Resemblance betwixt our Case and his, than betwixt Rising and not Rising. Besides, suppose the contrary: I have no Notion, how the Sun should be in Darknes, and therefore can as little conceive how he should rise out of it; ~~where~~ <sup>wherever</sup> he is, is Day, himself is Day: For if the Sun were benighted as oft as we are, whence has the Moon her Brightness? By all moderate People therefore it may be thought a little hard, the Sun cannot be supposed to shine upon the Earth, unless he shines thro' it: And for us to make

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<sup>f</sup> Clem. Alex. Cent. ii. Strom. Lib. vii. p. 520. See *The Enquiry*, Part 2. p. 20.

A DISQUISITION *upon*

this most resplendent of all the Heavenly Bodies, which has shone from the Creation of the World, and will shine on to the Conflagration of it, a daily Emblem of our rising out of Darkneſs, is making ſuch an Emblem as might puzzle the ingenious Mr. Quarles himſelf, (upon ſecond Thoughts) to find out the Reſemblance: at leaſt, if this be the Caſe, we need not ſcruple to apply to it that old Obſervation I have ſomewhere met with in Rhetorick, *nihil eſt in rerum Naturâ unde SIMILE duci non poteſt; viz. At this Rate there is nothing in Nature, but may ſerve to make an EMBLEM.*

Origen.  
Cent. 3.  
*Enquiry,*  
*ubi ſupra*

Wiſd. xvi.  
28.

A THIRD Reason aſſigned is -- To denote our Diligence in the Service of God, in being more forward to ariſe and ſet about it, than the Sun to run his Courſe. But here again, if the Sun move not, it can be no great Merit to be ſtirring before him; and if he does move, it can be no ſmall Vanity to boaſt of out-doing him. The Prophane perhaps would think it no more than a primitive *Gaſconade*. But this Reason has a Text to it: but it happens to be an *Apocryphal* one, and that too quite foreign to the purpoſe, as will appear to any one, who will take the Pains to conſider the genuine Senſe of it; not forgetting that the Author was a Jew, *i. e.* a Man of a quite contrary *Kebla*. 'Tis a Reason alſo, which to me ſeems to favour of the poetick *Hypotheſis*, viz. That when the Sun ſet, he put up his Steeds, went to bed, and ſometimes loitered in the Lap of *Tethys*. In fine, I do

do not see how this Notion can give any ghostly Consolation, unless to your early Risers only; the first Glance of Sunshine spoils the Conceit, and the very Spirit of it vanishes with the Morn.

A FOURTH Reason given is, <sup>s</sup>-- *That the EAST is the most honourable and excellent Part of the World.* And I do not at all doubt but this most excellent Reason came out of it; so natural a Prejudice in the Minds of Men is the Preference of their own Country; and the pleasantest Instance I have met withal, is amongst that most excellent Eastern Nation the *Chinese*, who have, time out of mind, maintained, *no other Country produces Men that see with both Eyes.* Yet some again are apt to think, They, of all People on the Earth, might have held their Tongues, since they seem to look a little upon the narrow themselves; and, thanks to Nature, we have visibly our Eyes as wide open as theirs.

YET why, in particular, is the EAST the most honourable and excellent Part of the Creation? viz. *Because it is the Seat, say the Fathers, of Light and Brightness.* But *ubi supra*

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<sup>s</sup> Orig. de Oratione: See the Enquiry, *ubi supra*: Item Quæstiones ad Orthodox. Qu. 118. See Dr. Cave's *Prim. Christ.* Part I. p. 288. And Mr. Bingham's *Antiquities*, Vol. V. Pag. 278. Item S. Aug. lib. ii. de Ser. Dom. in Monte, cap. v. de quo vide *Bishop Sparrow's Rationale* per Downes, p. 28.



A DISQUISITION *upon*

what will Peoples Antipodes say to this, with whom the Sun sets as it rises to them, and rises as it sets to them? I readily grant the SUN to be the Fountain, at least to Mankind, of Light and Brightness; but am not apprehensive our EAST, exclusive of it, has any more Light, or Brightness, than any other Quarter under the Heavens.

BUT there seems not to have been a Reason more generally embraced and professed by the Fathers <sup>b</sup>, than what I shall now mention in the fifth Place: viz. *That the EAST was the Place of Paradise, our antient Habitation and Country, which we lost in the first Adam by the Fall, and to which we hope to be restored again, as to our native Abode and Rest in the second Adam, Christ our Saviour.* These Considerations, I say, are an Argument for Eastward Adoration which has been graced by many of the greatest Names in Christian Story.

BUT, *pace tantorum Virorum*, we have a more sure Word, to which we shall do well  
 Col. iii. 1, to take heed; which saith, *If ye then be risen*  
 2. *with Christ, seek those things which are above,*  
 Luk. xii. *where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: Set*  
 34. *your affections on things above, not on things of the*  
*earth; for where your treasure is, there will your*

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<sup>b</sup> Basil. Greg. Nyss. Athanas. Cyrillus, Chrysostom.  
 &c. See Mr. Bingham's *Antiquities*, Vol. V. p. 278.

## Worshiping towards the EAST.

27

heart be also. Again another Scripture saith, *They that say such things declare plainly they seek a country, and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, i. e. an heavenly.* The same Author also in the next Chapter, speaking of the Christian Dispensation, tells us, *Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.* The present Argument therefore for turning our Eyes and our Hearts towards an EARTHLY JERUSALEM, tho' espoused by so many venerable Fathers, seems to be grounded entirely upon the *Millenarian Scheme* introduced by *Papias*; who, the so justly celebrated *Dupin* tells us, *gave Rise to a common Opinion in the three first Centuries, that before the Day of Judgment Christ should reign upon Earth a thousand Years with his Elect;* during which Term also, according to the then current Notion, *Jerusalem* was to be the Seat of his Empire. An Opinion (not to say Vision) which, notwithstanding its allowed Pre-  
tences to primitive Antiquity<sup>i</sup>, and general Reception by the greatest Men of old in the

Heb. xi.  
14, 15.

Heb. xii.  
22.

Hist. of the  
Church,  
Vol. II. p.  
60.

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<sup>i</sup> Il y a eu plusieurs anciens Docteurs renommez en Science & Sainteté, qui se sont laissez emporter a cette extravagance: *Histoire de l'Eglise, &c. par le Sueur, Tom. I. p. 492, item 556, &c.* This Author, amongst others of this Opinion, names Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusal. Basil, Ambrose, &c.

## A DISQUISITION upon

Church of Christ, has been now so long universally exploded, or, at least, obsolete, that no more needs be said of it at present, than that it can raise in us but very slender Expectations from the Holy Land, tho' we should turn to it seven times a Day. When *Crusado* was the Word indeed it might have had its Consequences.

BUT again; This is an Argument for turning to the EAST, which would oblige half Mankind to turn their backs upon it: for that all Nations to the Eastward of the supposed Situation of the new *Jerusalem*, by Virtue of the same Argument, must face about to the WEST, tho' in direct Opposition to, and in the very Teeth of the four first ingenious Reasons above-shewn to the contrary. --- But these things, I doubt not, will be easily reconciled by the learned MAGI of the Age, those fast Friends to the RISING SUN. Tho' honest Dr. *Cave* indeed says, for his Part, how it can be done, he is not able to imagine; and yet all Sides talk of no less than Apostolical Tradition and Practice.

Prim.  
Christ.  
Part I. p.  
289.

BUT leaving this Point to be adjusted by those whom it may more concern, amongst the Arguments taken from the Fathers on the present Subject, the sixth Place I shall assign to a Passage in *Lactantius*, Book II, Chap. x. We have already heard how the EAST is the Fountain of Light and Brightness; but here we have a Father tells us --- 'Tis God himself who is this Fountain,  
and



## *Worshipping towards the EAST.*

29

*and the Illuminator of all things, and that therefore the EAST is ascribed to him.*<sup>k</sup>

OF this Argument some one perhaps may say, as certain of our own Poets upon another occasion, --- 'Tis but by way of Simile: Give me leave then farther to observe, --- That, if there be any occasion in divine Worship to address ourselves towards some Object resembling God in the Qualities above-specified, the SUN surely has the best Claim to our regard, whether he be EAST or WEST, and especially in the South, where he appears in the greatest Splendor: This then being admitted as a Rule, we ought to vary our Position in Devotion every hour of the Day, praying in the Morning with the Magians to the EAST, at Noon with the Turks to the South<sup>l</sup>, and in the Evening with the Jews to the WEST.

WE may in this Place also not improperly consider the famous Saying of Ter-

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<sup>k</sup> Oriens Deo accensetur, quia Ipse Luminis fons, & Illustrator est Rerum: See Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Vol. V. p. 279.

<sup>l</sup> The Mahometans more particularly call that Part of the World where Mecca is situated by the name of Keblah; towards which they are obliged to turn themselves when they say their Prayers; and because Mecca is situated towards the South, this word Kebla is often taken for the South Part of the Heavens and the Earth: *Dictionary Sacrum*.

tullian,

*tullian, Orientem Christi Figuram!* <sup>m</sup> *The EAST, that Emblem of Christ!* --- Had the Father been called upon, I am apt to think he must have explained himself to mean *the Sun in the EAST*: By the same Liberty, with the same Emphasis and Propriety, may we also say aloud, --- *Meridiem Christi Figuram!* viz. *That the South rather, in his present State, is Christ's Emblem*; the South, I say, where the SUN receives his highest Exaltation, and shines triumphant in the brightest Throne of his Glory. But in truth, I could never see any just Authority we Christians have to worship God by Figures *which he hath not appointed*: The Jews, 'tis plain, were strictly prohibited it, and pretty sharply reprov'd for it: *To whom* (says the Prophet) *will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?* And Moses in the same Chapter where he cautions the People against facing to the Sun &c. in divine Service, has these words; --- *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire.* Now a Figure or Emblem is but another Word for a Similitude or Likeness, or Image; and I think nothing can be clearer than it is from the aforesaid Chap-

Isa. xl. 18.

Deutiv. 15

<sup>m</sup> *Nostræ Columbæ Domus simplex, etiam in editis semper & apertis & ad Lucem; amat Figuram Spiritus Sancti, Orientem Christi Figuram: Contra Valentin. cap. 3.*

ter, that we are forbid to worship God by any such *Mediums*, whether of *Nature*, *Art*, or *Fancy* ; the Reason whereof has been above implied, and may farther appear in the Course of this Disquisition.

BUT there can be no time more proper than the present, to pay a just Attention to the Sentiments of our profess'd Ritualist, the very eminent Dr. *Spencer*, so often cited in this Discourse ; who having given us his Remarks upon the western Situation of the *Jewish Sanctum Sanctorum*, seems to declare strongly in favour of the EAST, and puts the Argument last before us upon this footing, viz. *That God being Light, and dwelling in Light, therefore should his Servants worship him towards that Part of the Heavens from whence the World receives its Light* <sup>n</sup>. To which I think it may be fairly replied, that tho' we must allow the Premises, in *some one Sense to be Truth*, because they are *Scripture* <sup>o</sup>: yet can I see no Obligation to grant the Conclusion, because 'tis plain the *Scripture* did allow the contrary Practice ; nay, and treats, what the Doctor here espouses, as an

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<sup>n</sup> Homines proculdubio Æquo & Decoro multo magis convenire judicarent, ut Deus, qui Lux est, & Lucem inaccessam habitat, in Loco aliquo versus Orientem habitaret, & illius Servi versus Plagam unde Mundus illucescit eum adorarent: *De Leg. Heb. Rit. &c. p. 846.*

<sup>o</sup> *God is light*, 1 Joh. i. 5. *dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto*: 1 Tim. vii 16.



## A DISQUISITION upon

*Abomination* <sup>p</sup>. And tho' the Doctor will have it to be clear to any Man reading the Law, that the *Jews* received not any thing in command from God for erecting the *Sanctum Sanctorum* Westward <sup>q</sup>; I herein also beg leave to differ from him, as conceiving this Assertion to proceed only from his own Inadvertency; who, scarce three Pages before, had told us, <sup>r</sup> - - - *The Tabernacle had its Holy of Holies turned towards the West, as might be collected, (says he) and that not obscurely, from the Words of Moses, Exod. xxvi. 22. which Words of Moses, whoever is pleased to turn to them, will, at Sight, appear to carry with them a Command of God appointing the Situation* <sup>r</sup>. So that

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<sup>p</sup> O Son of man, turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater Abominations than these: and he brought me into the inner Court of the Lord's House, and behold at the Door of the Temple of the Lord, between the Porch and the Altar, were about five and twenty men, with their Backs towards the Temple of the Lord, and their Faces towards the East, &c. Ezek. viii. 15, 16.

<sup>q</sup> Cuivis Legem perlegenti clarum est, Israelitas de Sancto Sanctorum versus Occiduam Cœli regionem extruendo, nihil a Deo in mandatis accepisse: p. 846.

<sup>r</sup> Neque Templum solummodo, sed &, illius Prototypon, Tabernaculum, Sanctum Sanctorum Plagæ occidentali - - - obversum habuit: Hoc e Mosi verbis, haud obscure colligendum. Exod. xxvi. 22. p. 843.

<sup>r</sup> And for the Sides of the Tabernacle Westward Thou shalt make six Boards: Ita quidem hunc locum reddunt Nostri, alique; Sed nonnihil a vero illius Sensu deflectentes, nam vox Hebræa אֵלֶּיךָ cum ad res inanimatas transfertur, non latus, sed finem, terminum, extremitatem notat: Spencer ubi supra.

we may justly regard turning to the WEST not only as a tolerated, but an established part of the *Jewish* Service.

AGAIN, tho' it is true the Scripture says *God is Light*; yet I see nothing to the contrary, but that it would have been literally as true also, if it had been said, *God is not Light*; for *Light* (Gen. i.) is a *Creature*. And to obviate this Misconception of the Deity (prevailing very early in the EAST) to me seems the very Reason of God's thus addressing himself, by the Prophet, to his servant Cyrus --- *I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: --- I form the Light*. And as *Light* is not only a *created*, but *corporeal* Substance, (thus the Philosopher meant it, who assigned *Light* for the Body, as *Truth* for the Soul of God) I do not see how we can take the Text alleged on this occasion in a literal Sense, without falling into the Scheme, at least, of the refined Materialists, who maintained of old, That the first Principle was indeed an infinite Wisdom, but his Essence was only a pure *Æther*, or subtile *Light*, which diffus'd itself every where to give Life, Motion, and Reason, to all Beings †. --- But this Philosophy (whatever Ceremony may want to be supported) in the

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† See the *Chevalier Ramsay's Theology of the Antients*.  
p. 78.

## A DISQUISITION upon

present enlighten'd Age, I hope, will scarce pass for Orthodox. Tho' at the same time, God, by way of Comparison, may be called *Light*; for, as a Father well observes, *As the Sun is to the Sight, so is God to the Soul*<sup>t</sup>.

Joh. viii.  
12. i. 9.

So when our Saviour is said to be the *Light of the World*, and the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; Commentators teach us he is so called *Claritate Vitæ & Doctrinæ*; by reason of the *Brightness of his Example and Doctrinæ*; and in this Sense is *John Baptist* also said to have been a *burning and shining Light*.

Pf. xcvi. 2  
Pf. xviii.  
11.

To proceed: tho' 'tis true one Scripture says *God dwelleth in Light*; 'tis as true, another saith, *Clouds and darkness are round about him*: and yet another -- *He made darkness his secret place; his pavillion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds*: in his Commentary upon which last Psalm, Cardinal Bellarmin observes, *God's ordinary or common Method of manifesting himself was by a Cloud; and that he made use of dark Clouds to teach us, by way of Symbol, his INVISIBILITY, and that all these are metaphorical Expressions, to give us to understand that God is*

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<sup>t</sup> Quod enim Sol est Sensui nostro, id Intellectui est Deus. Nazianz. Orat. de Athanas.

*invisibly*



invisibly present v. In like manner may we observe of the Expressions on the other side also --- *These Things are an Allegory*, and serve only to teach us, God is the Spiritual Light of Man; or again, that nothing is hid from him, but all things Visible, open and naked before him: at the same time may we, with *Pythagoras*, maintain, *We cannot receive the Idea of a God by our corporeal Senses*: Tho' therefore, figuratively speaking, we may say, God is Light and dwelleth in Light; yet in a strict and literal Sense I shall not scruple, (till better inform'd) to profess myself of the Psalmist's Opinion-- *The darkness and the light to him are both alike*; and that he may be as truly said to dwell in the one as the other; and, strictly speaking, in neither.

vide Dict.  
Sac. in  
Voc. Idol.

Pf. cxxxix  
12.

I CAN therefore by no means give my Assent and Consent to what *Dr. Spencer* *ubi supra* advances as the Result of human Judgment, viz. *That men would think it just and decent that God should dwell in SOME PLACE towards the East*, when in my Judgment nothing can be more unjust and

<sup>u</sup> Ordinariè Deus autem per nebulam se ostendere solitus est, ut patet ex lib. Num. cap. ix. 1 Reg. viii. Mat. xvii, & alibi. viz. Exod. xl. 34. &c. Ut eo veluti Symbolo invisibilem se esse demonstret. --- Sunt omnia Metaphorica, ex quibus intelligimus Deum invisibiliter præsentem Nobis se facere. Vid. Bellarm. Explanat. in Pf. xvii. ver. 11. & 13.

indecent than for Men to pretend to limit God to any Place; especially for christian Men, when a Jew would teach us -- *God hath filled all Things, extends beyond all Things, and hath left nothing void of, or uninhabited by himself*<sup>w</sup>. When again Plato, and even Diogenes, would teach us -- *All things are full of God*<sup>x</sup>: and the former expressly, *That 'tis impossible God should be in a particular Place*<sup>y</sup>: which is yet more clearly express'd by one of the Fathers, who thereupon observes -- *God is his own Place*<sup>z</sup>: as does also another, adding withal --- *That he is his own World, and all Things to Himself*<sup>a</sup>: And the learned

<sup>w</sup> Πάντα πεπλήρωκεν ὁ Θεός, καὶ διὰ πάντων διηλύθει, καὶ κενὸν ἔστιν, ὅθεν ἕρμηνον ἀπολείπειν ἑαυτῷ. Philo, Sacrae Legis Allegoriarum, lib. ii. p. 41, & 42. Edit. Turneb.

<sup>x</sup> Θεῶν ἵπαι πλήρη πάντα. Plato, Leg. 10. pag. 899.  
Πάντα γὰρ ἐστὶ Θεὸς πλήρη. Diog. Cyn.

Hicce addas Virgilianum illud:

— Deum namque ire per omnes  
Terrasque, Tractusque Maris, Cælumque profundum.

GEOR. 4.

<sup>y</sup> Ὅτι οὐδὲ μήτε μέρη εἰσὶ, μήτε ὅλον τυγχάνει ὄν, ἢ πολὺ ἐστὶ ἀδυνατώτερον ἐγγιγνέσθαι πρ. Plato in Parmenide, p. 138.

<sup>z</sup> Ὁ μὲν ἔν Θεός αὐτός ἐστιν, καὶ ἀπερίγραπτος, ἐν ᾧ ὅτι ἐστιν, αὐτὸς γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τόπος ἐστὶ. Damascen. de Fide, lib. i. c. 16.

<sup>a</sup> *God is his own World to himself, his Place, and all things*, Tertullian. See *Ingenious Thoughts of the Fathers by Bohours*, p. 157. Lond. 1727. And I think I have somewhere seen this Expression; -- *Deus est suum Ubi*, however 'tis exactly expressive of my own Sense in the Matter.

Commen-

Commentator *Daneus*, upon the very Passage alluded to by Dr. *Spencer*, where God is represented as dwelling in Light, makes no difficulty to assure us, what is there said must be understood as spoken *improperly*, and after the manner of Men only. <sup>b</sup>

UPON the whole therefore, I should very willingly join Issue in the Case with Dr. *Spencer*, and leave it to the Judgment of Men, might I be sure it would be left to Men of Judgment; who I doubt would be soon agreed, 'tis impossible God should dwell any where *since, but where he did before Light was created*; That therefore Light could have no manner of Influence upon him in the Choice of his Habitation: if it had, certainly not this or that Quarter of the Heavens, but the Sun <sup>c</sup> itself must have been the Place, as being incomparably the most lightsom Dwelling he could possibly have fix'd upon; and to which the ἀπρόσιτον of the Apostle (viz the Epithet <sup>1 Tim. vi. 16.</sup> INACCESSIBLE) best agrees: and if this Habitation should be a moveable one, daily

<sup>b</sup> Impropiè, & more humano habitare dicitur Deus, quippe qui nullo loco continetur.

<sup>c</sup> Zoroaster taught his Followers, that Fire was the truest Shedinab of the divine Presence; that the Sun being the perfectest Fire, God had there the Throne of his Glory, and the Residence of his divine Presence in a more excellent manner than any where else. Connect. Part 1st. p. 216. See also Hyde's Religio veterum Persarum: cap. iv.



circling around the Earth, why should the EAST, in particular, ingross the honour of its Situation? And again, if it should be itself the Center of the Earth's Annual Circle about it, I do not see why any one Point of the Compass should have this Right of Claim more than the rest: Admitting therefore that *God dwells in Light*, yet doth it not therefore follow, *that he dwells in the EAST* more than in the WEST; or that the one End (to borrow Pl. XIX. 6. the Scripture Phrase) of the Heavens has a Jot better Title to our Devotions, than the other.

I SHALL now proceed to a Seventh Cause assign'd why we should worship towards the EAST, which may be said to be three-fold; viz, *Because Christ made his Appearance on Earth in the EAST; and there ascended into Heaven; and there will appear again at the last Day.*<sup>d</sup>

THAT Christ's Appearance on Earth was in the East to all those who were West of it, is what nobody can deny: And 'tis as sure also that it was in the West to all those vast populous Nations, which lie EASTWARD of the Holy Land. Now how good christian People in those Parts

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<sup>d</sup> Athan. Quæst. ad Antiochum; Q. 37. See Mr. Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*, Vol. v. p. 279. Item *The Canons of St. Basil*, Can. 92.

could look both *East and West* at the same time, as Dr. Cave says, *I cannot imagine*; unless, (upon second Thoughts) like some good Christians in our Parts they carried two Faces; then indeed no wonder they should look more ways than one; which verily, in some sort of Times might prove a most useful and laudable Qualification, as being no more than what we call *having our Eyes about us*; and why should it be thought a Thing incredible with us, that in foreign Countries Mankind should have the Gift of a double Aspect, when we daily behold so very many Instances of it at Home, and that with great Success? The Holy Land is not more directly opposite to the \* *Ladrone Isles*, than the Church of *England* to the Church of *Rome*, or *St. James's* to --- But to order! To order! Far be it from me to insinuate as if the bright Ornaments of the Beauty of Holiness had the least Cast with their Eyes, or that charming Loyalty can squint.

Prim.  
Christ. Pr.  
I. p. 289.

To return then to the Point before us:  
*In the EAST be ascended into Heaven*; thither then let our Thoughts follow him; only remembring what we learnt at School,  
*Cælum undique supra est.*

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\* These have their Situation amongst the easternmost Parts of our Hemisphere from Jerusalem.

BUT

BUT *there* (viz, in the EAST where he disappeared) *He will appear again at the last Day.* --- But, with the Father's Leave, this is News that wants Confirmation, which it can receive from Heaven only: The *Rabbies* indeed, who had ever a remarkable Zeal for bringing Business to their own Country, have long since fix'd the Grand Affize in the Valley of *Jehosaphat*; to which also the † Fathers have so far agreed, as to nominate the mount of *Olives*, overlooking the same, for the Judgment-Seat; but should we refer the Matter to an impartial Jury of *Dutch* Commentators, I should not at all be surpris'd to find them bringing in their old Verdict, *Ignoramus*. And, for my own part, I must confess, when I attempt to survey in one View all the Sons of Men, that ever have been, are, or are to be, I cannot for my Life conceive this is a Day's Work to be done in a *Dale*: and I once knew a *Worcestershire* Divine, who could no more bear to hear talk of the *Vale of Jehosaphat* for this purpose, than the *Vale of Evesham*: nay, he was most furiously certain, the latter, according to the most moderate Computations in Chorography, was above Ten Thousand times more capacious. This therefore, some one may say, was but a narrow Conceit, and whether *Jewish* or Christian, but one Degree

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† Vide Gerhardum de extremo Judicio, p. 60.



beyond that of the *Mahometans*; who (we may learn from Mr. *Maundrel*) are by all means for keeping Court within Doors; and are content, it seems, their great Mosque at *Damascus*, should be converted into a Town-Hall on this grand Solemnity; and that, for the better Dispatch of Business, a Session of Oyer and Terminer, should at the same time be held also in another at *Jerusalem*. But to remember whereof we are speaking. --- How much more awful and just is what the Scriptures teach us! *viz.* That the Living, as well as the Dead of all Generations, shall be caught up in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air; and there shall stand arrang'd, to right and left, on the immense Expanse of the ætherial Plains; when *Olivet* shall disappear, and Earth and Heaven fly away! <sup>e</sup>

BUT should we come into the Notion -- that our Saviour's second Coming will be in a direct perpendicular Line over the Mount of *Olives*, and that *there* then ought to be the Center of our Devotions, as of our Expectations, and that this is primitive Doctrine, how; again, will this primitive Doctrine be reconcil'd to *that more primitive*

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<sup>e</sup> Revelat. xx. 11.

## A DISQUISITION upon

of worshipping towards the EAST? when 'tis plain the Consequence of the latter would be worshipping from every Point of the Compass; for that all the World lies round the † WREKIN.

BUT in the eighth Place; I find another Passage of Scripture, generally alluded to by the Fathers, is much insisted upon by many even to this day, viz. *Mal. iv. 2.* \* Here, say they, is Christ directly call'd the SUN of Righteousness, by a true and literal Translation; and by turning towards the East, when we pay our Adoration, we are symbolically led to Christ.

TO this I reply; as to the use of Symbols to lead Men to God, I have already given my Opinion; and shall only have occasion here farther to observe, what also hath been already imply'd; --- That if the Argument be good, viz. We ought to turn to the EAST, because Christ is called the EAST; Then will it be good also, We ought to turn to the SUN, because he is

† Salopiæ Mons famosus.

\* Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. vii. Aug. de Ser. Dom. in Monte. L. ii. c. 5. Item, Hieron. in Amos, chap. vi. ver. 14. Versi ad Orientem pactum inimus cum Sole Justitiæ. Vide Orig. Eccles. Vol. v. p. 277. Unto you that fear my Name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, &c. *Mal. iv. 2.*

called the Sun; and thus ought we to do in whatever Point of the Heavens the Sun is visible to us, from EAST to WEST; at which rate, if we count by Degrees only, shall we have no less than 180 different Kebla's, or Points to turn our Eyes upon, in divine Service. And in the dark Days before Christmas, to serve God with any tolerable Exactness, and be critical (as who would not!) in his Devotion, a Man had need of a † Card, as well as a Kalendar; and, to steer his Vows aright, must pray, as well as sail, by Needle and Compass.

† tune  
Charte  
marine.

THE ninth Place I shall assign to the Opinion of the very learned and very worthy Mr. Bingham, with respect to the Ceremony now before us. His words are these, *The Original of this Custom seems to be derived from the Ceremony of Baptism, in which it was usual to renounce the Devil with their Faces to the West, and then turn about to the East, and make their Covenant with Christ; from whence (continues he) I conceive it became their common Custom to worship God after the same way that they had, at first, enter'd into Covenant with him.* -- In this, with the most sincere deference to so deserving a Man in what relates to the Antiquities of the Church, I beg leave to

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† Vol. v. Pag. 276.



diffent from him ; because (for ought I can possibly find) the Ceremony of turning to the EAST amongst Christians, was much prior to that of turning to the WEST; Dr. *Spencer* (if I take him right) supposes it to have generally prevailed *almost from the very Infancy of Christianity* <sup>g</sup>. And there is no room to dispute but that it was the Practice of the second Century; but for turning to the West, Mr. *Bingham* himself supplies us with no Authority, I can yet find, above the fourth. And indeed, from what *Dupin* observes, I am inclin'd to believe it had then its Rise; *In this Century*, (viz. the IV.) says he, *Ceremonies were carried to the highest Point of their Splendor*; --- *Baptism was administered with abundance of Ceremonies* <sup>h</sup>. Dr. *Cave* indeed particularly mentions this Ceremony of turning to the West at Baptism, in his *Primitive Christianity*; but the Authors he alleges for it are both of them Fourth-Century-Men; nor does he mention it as a primitive Ceremony, but expressly as *an additional Rite of After-ages*; observing, first of all, that *in the Apostles Age, Baptism was administered with great Nakedness*

Part I. p.  
314.

<sup>g</sup> Sane Christiani longe plurimi, a primis pene nascentis Christianismi Seculis, ad Orientem conversi præcabantur: *De Leg. Heb. Rit.* p. 846.

<sup>h</sup> Eccl. Hist. Vol. ii. p. 167.

and

and Simplicity, probably (says he) without any more Formality, than a short Prayer, and repeating the Words of Institution. And indeed Mr. Bingham himself, before he closes his Chapter, candidly expresses his own Diffidence, whether it were so or not as he had conjectured. Pag. 280.

AND here, by the way, I shall not scruple to declare my Opinion, That I do not think the Fathers had any more Reason to assign the West peculiarly to the Devil, than they had to assign the East peculiarly to Christ; and they must be allow'd very generous Adversaries in allotting their Enemy one Moiety of the Globe, as they did their Saviour the other; what is this but granting him *Divisum Imperium cum Jove?* in Milton's Words the very Boast of Satan, viz. *Divided Empire with Heaven's King I bold.* ubi supra

AT the same time it happens a little odd also, that, upon this grand Division, *Lucifer*, by the GRANT of the Fathers, should have the West allotted him; whereas, 'tis well known, he makes his Appearance every Morning in the East before the Sun itself; and that his first Transactions with Mankind, and Triumph over our

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i Stella gravis nobis Lucifer ortus erat. Ovid.

Race were in what we call the EAST. On the other Hand 'tis as well known also by all, who know any thing of sacred Antiquities, that the Apartment which God chose in his own House, wherein more peculiarly to manifest the divine Presence, was the *West-End of the Temple*. And I have often thought the Language of *Lactantius* and *St. Jerome*, upon this account, could not but give very great Offence and Scandal to the *Jews*. The WEST, says the former, is ascribed to that turbulent and wicked Spirit\*. And, says the latter, In our Mysteries, the first Thing we do, is to renounce him who dwells in the West<sup>1</sup>. When, that There is the very MAJESTY of God, was, with the Rabbies, as much a Proverb, as any in *Solomon*<sup>m</sup>.

THESE Considerations lead me to what I shall observe as the tenth and last Reason, for the present, why the primitive Christians worship'd towards the EAST; viz. *the Rule of Contraries*, or a Spirit of Opposition, not to say Enmity, towards the *Jews*.

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\* Occidens conturbatæ illi pravæque Menti ascribitur. *lib. ii. cap. 10.*

<sup>1</sup> In Mysteriis primum renunciamus ei, qui in Occidente est. *Hieron. in Amos vi. 14.*

<sup>m</sup> Majestas divina est in Occidente: *Maimon. Mor. Nevoch. P. iii. cap. 45.*



FOR what I have now said, methinks I already hear myself called to account; and my Answer is, I met with it as a late great Man in our Church once met with something else, to his Purpose, before me; *viz.* by prying into some Papers that bear the Name of Bishop Overal<sup>n</sup>. *Because, says my Author, the Jews were the deadliest, and most spiteful Enemies to Christianity that are in the World; in that regard were many Laws made by the Church, to have no Conformity with them, no more than with the Heathens in their Orders, SO PRAYING TO THE EAST came up.*

UPON which, that I may not be farther tedious, let it here suffice to observe only, That they who insist upon this Reason seem to forget, that herein they do actually conform themselves to the Heathens, who (as in the beginning of this Disquisition has been shewn) in their idolatrous Worship of the SUN, were the primitive Practisers of this since most Catholick Ceremony in the Church of Christ. Which Opinion I am the more confirm'd in, by a Passage I have lately met with in the elaborate Works of the learned Mr. Theoph. Gale, sometime Fellow of Magdalen College in Oxford; who, express-

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<sup>n</sup> *Additional Notes to Dr. Nicholls, upon the Common Prayer, p. 16. of the said Notes.*

*Demon.  
Worship.*

ly treating of the Derivation of *Popish* from *Pagan* Rites, has these Words. - - Another piece of *Pagan* *Δειμονολατρεία* was their Ceremony of Bowing and Worshipping towards the EAST: for the Pagans universally Worshipped the SUN as their Supreme God, even the more reform'd of them, the new Platonists, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, as it appears by his Oration to the Sun; whence it came to pass, that the Sun rising in the EAST, They usually worshiped that way. Hence also they built their Temples, and buried their Dead towards the EAST. Court of the Gentiles, Part III. p. 206.

BUT to draw towards a Conclusion: Thus, Readers, courteous and uncourteous, (for I expect both, and shall be very well content if I have but enough of either) have I with all Fidelity laid before you the most plausible, and generally receiv'd Reasons of the Fathers for worshipping towards the EAST; and, without respect of Persons, as impartially examin'd them, as I have freely exhibited them: Whether upon their being weigh'd they will be found wanting in the Ballance or not, I shall leave every man to judge for himself, as I do for myself. Father Origen indeed seems to squeak; or, at least, to betray a Diffidence of the Goodness of his Cause, when he desires Men would be so civil, as not to be too busy in enquiring in-  
to

to it °. And St. Austin, how well soever affected to the same, yet fairly acknowledges, it was a piece of Devotion, *his Bible no where taught him* †. And if we may take Vossius his Opinion, who, as I have intimated, seems also transiently to have considered the Case, he will tell us downright --- *This same old Custom amongst Christians, contrary to the Jewish, of turning at their Devotions towards the rising Sun, stands upon no sound Foundation* v. Some one perhaps may add; Upon neither a better nor worse, than the Ruins of the oldest Idolatry that has been since the World began <sup>a</sup>; supported indeed by a S E T T of After-thoughts, which, however unphilosophical or unscriptural, yet must be allow'd, considering the Gravity of the Authors, not to be altogether undiverting. Our great *Stillingfleet*, 'tis true, *ubi supra* says in plain English, *they are very insufficient*. --- But a just Sense of the Duty of filial Reverence, has all along constrained me to tread as light as possible

° See *Stillingfleet's Ecclesiastical Cases*, p. 267. Ed. 2d.

† Nulla scriptura nos docuit versus orientem orare. *Vide Durand. Rat. Lib. v. Cap. ii.*

v Orandi Ritus antiquus Christianorum, Judaico contrarius, quo ad Solem Orientem conversi precabantur, nullo solido nititur Fundamento. *Vide Indicem Theologiae Gentilis &c. in Voc. Orandi.*

a Quod scilicet Consuetudo obvertendi se ad Orientem adorandi causâ, ab Idololatriâ ortum suum habuisse videatur, nempe a Solis orientis Adoratione: quæ omnium prima & antiquissima videtur fuisse Idololatria. *Lud. Cappel. ubi supra.*



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over the venerable Ashes of the ancient Fathers; and for this Reason I hope to find the more Indulgence myself, should I not be able hereafter so religiously to keep my Countenance under all the violent Temptations to the contrary, which may occur thro' the Course of a DISQUISITION from the Beginning of the World to this Day. The Man, who in so immense a Tract of Time can meet with nothing to make him smile, must certainly have been inducted, either into the *Cave of Trophonius*, or the Vicarage of ---- But since it is, in Fact, a Subject, wherein many Points will be found to arise, that may serve to divert, as well as inform the World about us, it were Pity it should languish in the Hands of a depress'd and drooping Genius, when it is so capable of being cultivated by one more fortunate and joyous, *Cui faciles Rifus*. And to such an one I heartily commend it, and shall freely communicate my Observations: And having traversed the Country before him (if he be one that loves a Day's Sport, as I must own I once did myself) this I shall now tell him for his Encouragement ---- He will find the *Covers Thin*, and *Game Plenty*. But for me, *tot jam labentibus annis* — For ten long Years the standing Object of a Faction's Rage, 'tis time that I retire, *Et satis est monstrasse Viam*.

F I N I S.

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